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Letter dated 25 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I have the honour to write to you, in your capacity as President of the Security Council of the United Nations for the month of April, regarding the Security Council debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, to be held today.

Once again, the Security Council denies a legitimate request made by the Non-Aligned Movement to participate in the debates of this organ to discuss this critical issue, preventing NAM from expressing its points of view and proposals. It is worth noting that the Non-Aligned Movement consists of 118 States Members of the United Nations, including the overwhelming majority of the States in the Middle East.

The decision taken by the Security Council is yet another instance of the lack of transparency that characterizes the work of the Council and confirms, once again, the need for an urgent and profound reform of this organ, including its working methods.

I request that you kindly distribute this letter and its annex, which contains the statement Cuba planned to deliver on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at the aforesaid debate, as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cuba
Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau
of the Non-Aligned Movement

07-31899 (E) 270407

Annex to the letter dated 25 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau, for the debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East

25 April 2007

I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

During the last few months, serious efforts have been exerted by concerned parties, including the League of Arab States and the new Palestinian national unity government, and hopes are rising to revive the peace process towards the just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On last March 20, the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) issued a statement, which was circulated as a General Assembly and Security Council document (A/61/818-S/2007/161), welcoming the formation of the Palestinian National Unity Government after the achievement of the Mecca Agreement. It also expressed the view that the formation of this new government is a welcome sign of the unity of the Palestinian people at this difficult time.

Despite the formation of a National Unity Government, the Palestinian people continue to suffer as a result of the international aid blockade that has been imposed for more than a year now and has yet to be lifted.

While attention is focused on the efforts to revive the peace process and on the actions of the new Palestinian national unity government, this dire situation on the ground cannot be ignored. As long as this situation persists, it will surely undermine any progress that may be achieved.

During the month of March, the Israeli occupying forces carried out numerous violent military incursions and arrests in Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps, killing and injuring more Palestinian civilians, including children and destroying more civilian property and infrastructure.

The Movement deeply regrets that the number of Palestinian civilians being imprisoned and detained by Israel continues to swell, with a total of more than 10,000 Palestinian prisoners, including women and children, currently being held in Israeli jails and detention centres.

Israel continues its unlawful construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in East Jerusalem, in total disregard for the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the resolutions of the United Nations.

NAM reiterates that there will not be a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine unless it is based on the principle of territory for peace, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the entire Palestinian territory

occupied since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

NAM reiterates its satisfaction with the steps taken by the Lebanese Government to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), particularly through the deployment of the armed forces in the region south of the Litani River and along the Blue Line. NAM also welcomes the deployment of the Lebanese armed forces along the northern and eastern borders of Lebanon in order to ensure the security and stability of the borders.

NAM remains deeply concerned by the ongoing Israeli air and land violations of the Blue Line in breach of resolution 1701 (2006). We strongly call on Israel to end its occupation of the northern part of Al-Ghajar town on the northern side of the Blue Line and to immediately refrain from any violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006), and to refrain from any provocation to the Lebanese armed forces or UNIFIL.

NAM calls for a prompt settlement of the Sheba'a farms issue, ensuring the respect of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, as stipulated in resolution 1701 (2006) and it notes, in this regard, the proposal by the Lebanese Government in its seven-point plan regarding the Sheba'a farms. We call on all parties to cooperate to protect Lebanon's sovereign rights in that area and we note the important endeavours of the United Nations Secretary-General in this regard.

NAM is acutely aware of the enormous challenge facing Lebanon resulting from the 1.2 million cluster bomblets launched by Israel during its aggression against Lebanon last summer. NAM condemns once again the use of such weaponry by Israel and deplores the death toll resulting from them. NAM strongly calls on Israel to provide the exact locations of use of those deadly weapons, as well as the maps of mines planted during its occupation of South Lebanon.

We urge the Security Council to decide the entry into force without further delay of a full and lasting ceasefire.

NAM welcomes the generous contributions and pledges made during the "Rafia Hariri Paris 3" conference held in Paris on 25 January 2007.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms once again that all measures and action taken, or to be taken by Israel, which purports to modify the legal, physical and demographic condition and institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as the Israeli measures to implement its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect.

We also reaffirm that all these measures and actions, including the illegal construction and expansion of the Israeli settlements in the Syrian Golan since 1967, are a challenge to the international community and a clear violation of international law, international agreements, the Charter of the United Nations and decisions, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981), and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

The Movement demands that Israel abide by Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw completely from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967.

The Movement things that there is a real opportunity at present for resumption of the peace process in the Middle East towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement, and urges the international community to uphold its responsibilities to ensure that this opportunity is not lost.

We call on the Israeli Government to accept the Arab Peace Initiative and call for the resumption of a process of serious and direct negotiations on all fronts.

The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to support and contribute in all possible ways to achieve a just, complete and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the principle of territory for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the road map.